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TAGS: [PREL](#) [UNSC](#) [YI](#) [RS](#)  
SUBJECT: KOSOVO: MFA ON VETO, AND UN PERMREP CHURKIN'S LEASH  
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Classified By: Charge d'Affaires Daniel Russell: 1.4 (b, d).

11. (C) In a June 5 meeting, prior to his June 6 departure for the G8 summit, Russian Special Envoy for Kosovo Aleksandr Botsan-Kharchenko warned that the international community was "close to gridlock" on Kosovo. He expressed concern over a potential effort to push for a quick vote within the Security Council on the Ahtisaari plan, which would further "raise tensions." (More bluntly, according to UK Ambassador Brenton, Deputy Foreign Minister Karasin explicitly warned a visiting group of UK parliamentarians on June 4 that Russia would veto, if its hand was forced.) Botsan-Kharchenko reiterated that the GOR was ready to discuss Kosovo at the Heilingendamm G-8 Summit, and held out a "small chance" for compromise in the Security Council.

12. (C) Botsan-Kharchenko raised the exchanges between Russian Ambassador to the UN Churkin and USUN Ambassador Khalilzad, characterizing the conversations as "interesting," but not enough to address Russian concerns. In response to whether Churkin had any room to maneuver, Botsan-Kharchenko insisted that "some space" existed for creativity. Botsan-Kharchenko noted that Churkin was operating within two firm constraints (reftel):

-- First, FM Lavrov remained completely averse to the Ahtisaari plan, which extended to "taking note" of the document in the resolution text. Botsan-Kharchenko clarified that the GOR was prepared to accept "80 percent" of the Ahtisaari plan, including annex elements that strengthened the self-administration functions in Kosovo, and that in preparation for the G8 he was itemizing all aspects of the Ahtisaari plan that the GOR endorsed.

-- Second, the GOR rejected any process that automatically led to Kosovo's independence, and insisted upon a second UNSC vote. Botsan-Kharchenko indicated that the negotiating period of "no less than one year" was a going in position.

13. (C) Pushed to explain why this refashioned formula would produce anything other than the current gridlock, Botsan-Kharchenko was unpersuasive. While the GOR would use a new negotiating period to encourage the Serbs to reach a compromise with the Kosovars, Russia could not guarantee Serbian flexibility and would not commit to abstain from a follow-on resolution in that circumstance. Botsan-Kharchenko reiterated that the Serbs needed more time and that Belgrade would change its approach as Serbia moved closer to EU integration. By adopting significant portions of the Ahtisaari plan, Botsan-Kharchenko argued that Belgrade would be denied a "victory" and the reality of strengthened Kosovo self-governing institutions would instill greater pragmatism in the negotiations. Recognizing that his recap of MFA talking points provided little optimism for a breakthrough, Botsan-Kharchenko concluded by saying "we have to place our

hopes on the Churkin-Khalilzad dialogue."

14. (C) Comment: Botsan-Kharchenko's comments confirmed that the MFA is not engaged in creative thinking on solutions to the Kosovo impasse. Putin's public pronouncements and direct engagement on this issue appear to have left little room for maneuver.

RUSSELL